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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An endoscope suitable for autoclaving comprising:
a switch provided on an outer surface of the endoscope; and
a pressing member that shields the switch to keep the switch watertight, the pressing member including an elastic portion which can elastically deform in response to a pressure load and a presser movable in a direction in which the switch is pressed in response to elastic deformation of the elastic portion;

wherein the switch and the presser are arranged to be distant from each other by a predetermined distance, the predetermined distance being set longer than a distance the presser moves when the presser is loaded with a preset first pressing force due to pressurizing upon autoclaving, the predetermined distance further being set such that the switch is pressed by the movement of the presser when the presser is loaded with a preset second pressing force that is larger than the preset first pressing force. ~~a gap is provided between the switch and the presser, the gap being set so as to be maintained even in a state in which the pressing member is loaded by pressurizing due to autoclaving.~~

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) An endoscope according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the distance between an end of said presser and said switch observed before start of autoclaving is set to a value that disables said presser of said~~ the first pressing force is a force exerted on the pressing member from pressing said switch under pressure released at a decompression step of the autoclaving at which at least an autoclave is decompressed.

5. (Currently Amended) An endoscope according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the distance between an end of said presser and said switch observed before start of autoclaving is set to a value that disables said presser of said~~ the first pressing force is a force exerted on the pressing member ~~from pressing said switch~~ due to a difference in pressure occurring between a decompression step of the autoclaving and a pressurization step thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) An endoscope according to Claim 1, further comprising a linking means that links an interior of said endoscope and the exterior thereof when an external pressure of said endoscope is lower than an internal pressure thereof, and that seals the interior of said endoscope when the external pressure of said endoscope is higher than the internal pressure thereof.

7-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) An endoscope according to Claim 1, wherein said pressing member further comprises a waterproof film that shields said presser and said switch.

17. (Previously Presented) An endoscope according to Claim 16, wherein a coil spring is engaged with an inner surface of the waterproof film.

18. (New) An endoscope according to Claim 1, wherein the hardness of the elastic portion is set such as to prevent the switch and the presser from coming in contact with each other when the presser is loaded with the first pressing force.

19. (New) An endoscope according to Claim 1, wherein the first pressing force is 0.3 MPa.

20. (New) A method for manufacturing an endoscope suitable for autoclaving, the method comprising:

providing a switch on an outer surface of the endoscope;

providing a pressing member that shields the switch to keep the switch watertight, the pressing member including an elastic portion which can elastically deform in response to a pressure load and a presser movable in a direction in which the switch is pressed in response to elastic deformation of the elastic portion; and

setting a gap provided between the switch and the presser such that the gap or portion thereof is maintained when the pressing member is loaded by pressurizing due to autoclaving.

21. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the setting comprises setting a distance between an end of said presser and said switch observed before start of autoclaving to a value that disables said presser of said pressing member from pressing said switch under pressure released at a decompression step of the autoclaving at which at least an autoclave is decompressed.

22. (New) The method according to claim 20, wherein the setting comprises setting a distance between an end of said presser and said switch observed before start of autoclaving to a value that disables said presser of said pressing member from pressing said switch due to a difference in pressure occurring between a decompression step of the autoclaving and a pressurization step thereof.

23. (New) The method according to claim 20, further comprising linking an interior of said endoscope and the exterior thereof when an external pressure of said

endoscope is lower than an internal pressure thereof for sealing the interior of said endoscope when the external pressure of said endoscope is higher than the internal pressure thereof.

24. (New) The method according to claim 20, shielding said presser and said switch with a waterproof film.

25. (New) The method according to claim 24, engaging an inner surface of the waterproof film with a coil spring.